



Westhoughton Urban District Council.

Annual Report

of the
**Medical Officer of Health
and the Sanitary Inspector.**



Year ending, December 31st, 1921.





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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE
WESTHOUGHTON URBAN DISTRICT
COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report on the conditions concerning the public health, and sanitation of the district.

The general health during 1921 was satisfactory. The birth-rate, death-rate and infectious returns are similar to last year, thus maintaining the improvement of recent years. The infantile death-rate is less satisfactory and has increased from 91 last year, to 117 per 1,000 births, which almost approaches the average for the last ten years. Further reference to this subject will be found under appropriate heading.

The effect of trade depression has been keenly felt in the district, and particularly since the time of the coal dispute many people have suffered financial hardship.

The local District Nursing Association, and Care Committee for Tuberculous Sufferers have carried on excellent work, and although the township is not provided with a hospital there is facility for admission of patients to the leading hospitals of Manchester, Bolton and Wigan.

Overcrowding exists in many houses in spite of the number of new houses occupied on the Hindley's Estate. It seems impossible at the present time to secure accommodation for the people.

General Statistics.

Area (acres)—5560. Population (1921)—15,870. No. of inhabited houses (1921)—3318. No. of families or separate occupiers (1921)—3651. Rateable value—£82,480. Sum represented by a penny rate—£280

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

| | | Total | M | F | { Birthrate—23.1 |
|----------|------------------|-------|-----|-----|------------------|
| | | | | | |
| Births { | Legitimate ... | 353 | 180 | 173 | { Birthrate—23.1 |
| | Illegitimate ... | 14 | 12 | 2 | |

Deaths ... 239 117 92 Deathrate 13.1

No. of women dying in (or in consequence of) child-birth—from Sepsis, 1; from other causes, 1.

Deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 births—Legitimate, 43; Illegitimate, ; Total 43.

Deaths from Measles (all ages)—none. Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)—3. Deaths from Diarrhoea (under two years of age)—3.

Summary of Statistics.

| Year. | Birth-rate | D'th-rate | Epidemic D'th-rate | P'thisis D'th-rate | Respiratory Death-Rate | Rate of deaths under 1 y'r to 1000 Births. |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1921 ... | 23.1 | 13.1 | 0.31 | 0.56 | 1.51 | 117 |
| 1920 ... | 23.4 | 11.1 | 0.57 | 0.38 | 2.28 | 91 |
| Mean of 10 yrs. 1911—1920 | 23.6 | 13.8 | 1.39 | 0.57 | 3.1 | 118 |
| Inc. or dec. in 1920 on :— | | | | | | |
| Previous Year | —0.3 | +2.0 | —0.26 | +0.18 | —0.77 | +26 |
| Ten yrs. aver'ge | —0.5 | —0.7 | —1.08 | —0.01 | —1.59 | —1 |

Births.

The number of births registered during the year was 357, of these 192 were males, and 175 females. This is equal to a birth-rate of 23.1 compared with 23.4 last year. The birth-rate for England and Wales during the same period was 22.4. There were 14 illegitimate births.

| Year | Total Births | Males. | Females | Birth-rate | County Urban Birth-rate | England and Wales |
|------|--------------|--------|---------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1921 | 357 | 192 | 175 | 23.1 | ... | ... |
| 1920 | 370 | 201 | 169 | 23.4 | ... | ... |
| 1919 | 336 | 180 | 156 | 20.9 | 16.58 | 18.5 |
| 1918 | 284 | 138 | 146 | 19.2 | 16.09 | 17.7 |
| 1917 | 290 | 160 | 130 | 18.8 | 16.27 | 17.8 |

Deaths.

During the year there were registered 209 deaths—equal to a death-rate of 13·1 as against 11·1 last year. The death-rate for England and Wales was 12·1

| Year | Deaths under one year. | Total Deaths. | Death-rate. | County, Urban Death-rate | England and Wales. |
|------|------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1921 | 43 | 209 | 13·1 | ... | ... |
| 1920 | 34 | 176 | 11·1 | 12·83 | 12·4 |
| 1919 | 29 | 192 | 12·6 | 14·01 | 13·8 |
| 1918 | 28 | 219 | 15·7 | 17·4 | 13·8 |
| 1917 | 30 | 156 | 10·1 | 14·05 | 14·4 |

Infantile Mortality.

I regret having to report an increase in the number of deaths of children under one year. Recent years have shewn a marked improvement in this direction and one hoped that such improvement would be progressive and permanent. Last year the Infantile death-rate was 91 per 1,000 births, and during 1921 the numbers have increased to an extent, that the rate is 117. Of course after several good years it would be unfair to attach too much importance to an increase which one hopes to be temporary, but to say the least, the rate is disappointing to those closely associated with the efforts to save and improve child life. That we are up against a great problem is only too obvious. So many factors enter into the subject. How far the financial hard times have affected the question it is impossible to say, but it is fair to assume that industrial strife, worry, and poverty must have an ill effect on the expectant mother.

Sanitary and other local improvements can and do help considerably in solving the problem, but the result of such labours is tremendously minimised if we have a people who are not prosperous, happy and well-fed.

I think such a conclusion is borne out on investigating the figures for the year. Although the summer was one of the longest and hottest on record, deaths of children under two years from diarrhoea only numbered 3, whereas 17 deaths were certified as due to congenital debility or premature birth.

From the following age list it will be noted that of the 43 deaths no fewer than 12 failed to survive 7 days, and 6 died within 24 hours of birth. Of the total number I find that 19 were first babies, 3 deaths were of twin babies.

| Deaths | Under 1 day | 1 to 7 days | 1 to 4 weeks | 1 to 3 months | 3 to 6 months | 6 to 12 mths. |
|---------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Males | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Females | 1 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 14 | 6 | 7 | 4 |

Rate of deaths under 1 year per 1,000 births :

| Year. | Westhoughton | County Urban | England and Wales |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Average 10 years 1911—1920 | 118 | 110 | 83 |
| 1921 | 117 | | |
| 1920 | 91 | 95 | 80 |
| 1919 | 99 | 94 | 89 |
| 1918 | 91 | 101 | 97 |
| 1917 | 103 | 96 | 97 |

Maternity and Child Welfare.

Much excellent work has been carried on during the year under conditions much less favourable than at any time since the scheme was established. Perhaps in no walk of life does one see more of the effects of financial shortage. In the Centre it has been a marked feature that mothers advised to carry out certain suggestions were unable to do so owing to lack of funds. We have helped so far as we were able. In the homes the Health Visitors have found similar conditions, and have been able to obtain assistance for the cases which according to hard and fast scale were proved necessitous. But one knows that there are many homes in the district where hardship is being keenly felt, but where the wages may not be just within the agreed scale or the parents willing to accept outside assistance. In such instances one cannot help feeling our limited capacity and how much more we should like to do.

The attendance at the weekly Centre has been excellent and every week has emphasised the need for larger premises. Unfortunately economy has compelled the re-consideration of the War Memorial Scheme, with the result that as regards the School Clinic the question seems indefinitely postponed.

Consequently near the end of the year a deputation from the Maternity Committee visited the Ministry of Health with a request that the Child Welfare Scheme should proceed and a Caretaker be appointed to occupy the upper floor.

After consideration this course has been sanctioned on the definite understanding that the amount of money to be spent on the building is reduced to absolute minimum. So we are likely to be in the premises before the summer is far advanced. The change will be welcomed by all who have suffered the inconveniences of the present arrangement.

Thanks are due to the Ladies' Committee especially to those who have regularly given service on Centre Days.

The following is a summary of particulars associated with the routine duties of the Health Visitors :—

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Total Births registered | ... | ... | 357 |
| „ „ notified | ... | ... | 375 |
| „ Visits (Birth enquiries) | .. | ... | 375 |
| „ „ Children under 1 year | ... | ... | 3764 |
| „ „ „ over „ | ... | ... | 1374 |
| „ „ Expectant Mothers | ... | ... | 250 |
| Sanitary defects reported | ... | ... | 60 |
| Medical assistance advised & obtained | | | 46 |
| No. of Still-births reported | ... | ... | 16 |
| Breast-fed Babies | ... | ... | 214 |
| Bottle-fed Babies | ... | ... | 147 |
| Rate of deaths under 1 year | | | |
| per 1,000 births | ... | ... | 117 |

I think I ought to mention the shortage of midwives which exists in the district. There are only eight on the register, and as these are somewhat unequally distributed, and the township so scattered it follows that a difficulty is experienced in some quarters. This especially applies to South Ward.

I have reported the fact to the County Authorities and elsewhere in the hope that some suitably qualified person may be induced to practice in this area.

Administration.

During the year the following cases were admitted to the Infectious hospital: Scarlet Fever—19 cases (no deaths); Enteric Fever—3 cases (2 deaths); Diphtheria—3 cases (1 death).

The Small-pox hospital at Roger's Farm has been renovated and is always available for admission of patients. There were no cases during 1921.

During the year the water on analysis was found to be satisfactory.

Arrangements exist for chemical and bacteriological work, which is carried out at the Pathological Laboratories of Manchester University. Thirteen specimens were submitted for examination.

A Motor Ambulance is provided for removal of infectious cases, and it is hoped, in the near future, to replace horse-drawn vehicles by motor for use in sickness and accident cases

Zymotic Disease.

There were notified 77 cases of infectious diseases, including 18 cases of pneumonia compared with 72 yeast year:—

| 1921 | 1920 | 1919 | 1918 | 1917 | Average |
|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| 77 | 72 | 77 | 417 | 236 | 175 |

The following is a summary of cases occurring during the year :—

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| Disease | CASES NOTIFIED. Years. | | | | | | | | | | | Total Deaths removed to Hospital in dist'r't | Hospital Deaths in Hosp'l of persons residing in dist'r't |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|--|--|
| | Years. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total Cases at all ages | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-5 | 5-10 | 10-15 | 15-20 | 20-35 | 35-45 | 45-65 | 65 & over | | |
| Diphtheria | 9 | 1 | ... | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Erysipelas | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Scarlet Fever | 34 | 2 | ... | 9 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 19 | ... |
| Enteric Fever | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Puerperal Fever | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Ophthalmia Neonatorum | 4 | 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Encephalitis Lethargica | 3 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | ... |
| Pneumonia | 18 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | ... | ... |
| Whooping Cough... .. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... |
| Diarrhoea (under 2 yrs.) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... |
| Totals | 78 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 26 | 3 |

| Ophthalmia Neonatorum | Notified | Case s. | | | Vision Un- impaired | Vision Impaired | Total Bli'dn'ss | Deaths |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| | | At Home | In Hosp'l | Treated | | | | |
| ... | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | ... | ... | 1 recovered Death due to Marasmus |

Tuberculosis.

During the year there were notified 24 cases of this disease, 16 being of pulmonary type and 8 non-pulmonary. The notification of this disease in the district appears to be efficient.

There were 9 deaths due to pulmonary tuberculosis and 4 due to non-pulmonary affections. The affected houses have been thoroughly disinfected and precautions taken to prevent further spread of the disease.

Adoptive Public Health Acts, etc.

The Health Committee has had under consideration the adoption of certain bye-laws which would be of great assistance in attempting to bring about corresponding sanitary improvements. In this connection formal application is likely to be made to the Ministry of Health in the near future.

The following have already been adopted by the Council :—

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890.

Bye-laws concerning Slaughter-houses—1873.

Common Lodging Houses—1873.

Nuisances—1873.

Cleaving of Footways—1873.

Streets and Buildings—1902, 1917.

Sanitary Administration.

SCAVENGING AND REMOVAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.

The work is carried out by the local Authority and has been satisfactory during the year. The privy middens are emptied during the day and the refuse is disposed of by tipping or pulverising. The pulverising plant is working satisfactorily and analysis shews the product to have a fair manurial value.

The sewage disposal has also been satisfactory. The method of precipitation and filtration. The character of the drainage is by gravitation, and there are no areas without proper drainage system.

CLOSETS AND ASHPITS.

Privy Middens : No. of middens—1256. No. of closets attached to these middens—1871. No. of pail closets—2. No. of dry ashpits (excluding middens)—384. No. of fresh-water

closets—1141. No. of portable receptacles for refuse—532. No. of waste-water closets—117. No. of privy closets converted during 1921 to fresh W.C's.—260. To waste W.C's.—none. To pails, &c.—none. No. of pail closets converted to Fresh W.C's.—1. Waste W.C's.—none. No. of waste-water closets converted to fresh-water closets—none. The Council contributes half the cost of conversion of privy middens to fresh W.C's.

SCHOOLS.

The sanitary condition has been satisfactory during the year. In one instance where pail closets exist, the managers have agreed to convert these to W.C's.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are 12 of these in the district. They have been regularly inspected and their condition found to be satisfactory.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, AND MILK AND CREAM REGULATIONS.

Sampling has been carried out by the Inspector. 39 samples of milk were submitted to the County Analyst who reported all samples to be genuine.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, ETC.

These have been periodically inspected, and on the whole have been found fairly satisfactory. There are 68 registered cow-keepers.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

The slaughter-houses have been regularly inspected. The Committee have under consideration a detailed report as to the condition of the 11 licensed premises from the point of view of an enforcement of the conditions set out in the "Model Bye-Laws." Several new applications for licenses were received. The premises were inspected, and the Committee after careful consideration decided to refuse the applications.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

In addition to a Medical Officer of Health, the Staff consists of a well qualified Sanitary Inspector, who also acts as Markets Superintendent, and two Health Visitors having respectively the following qualifications: 1.—Hospital Training and C.M.B. 2.—Health Visitor's Certificate (Royal Sanitary Institute) and C.M.B.

Housing.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total—92.

(b)—As part of a municipal housing scheme—92.

1. *Unfit dwelling houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)—33.

(2) Number of dwelling-housing which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910—nil.

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation—nil.

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation—nil

2. *Remedy of Defects without Service of formal Notices.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers—30.

3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

(a)—Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919—nil.

(b)—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied—6

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—

(a) by owners—30.

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners—nil.

(c)—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909—nil.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently.

William H. Leigh.

May 30th, 1922.